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LYRICAL BALLADS,

WITH

OTHER POEMS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By W. WORDSWORTH.

Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum!

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. N. LONGMAN AND O. REES, PATERNOSTER-ROW,

BY BIGGS AND CO. BRISTOL.

1800.

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HART-LEAP WELL.

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road which leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable chace, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

The Knight had ridden down from Wensley moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
He turn'd aside towards a Vassal's door,
And, "Bring another Horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another Horse!"—That shout the Vassal heard,
And saddled his best steed, a comely Grey;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

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Joy sparkled in the prancing Courser's eyes;
The horse and horsemen are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they gallop'd made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanish'd, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Brach, Swift and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and weary up the mountain strain.

The Knight hallo'd, he chid and cheer'd them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
But breath and eye-sight fail, and, one by one,
The dogs are stretch'd among the mountain fern.

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Where is the throng, the tumult of the chace?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
— This race it looks not like an earthly race;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain side;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting then, he lean'd against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
He neither smack'd his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gaz'd upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter lean'd,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious act;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yean'd,
And foaming like a mountain cataract.

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Upon his side the Hart was lying stretch'd:
His nose half-touch'd a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetch'd
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
Was never man in such a joyful case,
Sir Walter walk'd all round, north, south and west,
And gaz'd, and gaz'd upon that darling place.

And turning up the hill, it was at least
Nine roods of sheer ascent, Sir Walter found
Three several marks which with his hoofs the beast
Had left imprinted on the verdant ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by living eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

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I'll build a Pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small Arbour, made for rural joy;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

A cunning Artist will I have to frame
A bason for that fountain in the dell;
And they, who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it Hart-leap Well.

And, gallant brute! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be rais'd;
Three several pillars, each a rough hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have graz'd.

And in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour,
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

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Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure;
— The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure."

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretch'd above the spring.
And soon the Knight perform'd what he had said,
The fame whereof through many a land did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steer'd,
A cup of stone receiv'd the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter rear'd,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwin'd,
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

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And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter journey'd with his paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

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PART SECOND.

The moving accident is not my trade.
To curl the blood I have no ready arts;
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song to thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanc'd that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspins at three corners of a square,
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine,
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

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The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head;
Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
"Here in old time the hand of man has been."

I look'd upon the hills both far and near;
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seem'd as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one who was in Shepherd's garb attir'd,
Came up the hollow. Him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquir'd.

The Shepherd stopp'd, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehears'd.
"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old,
But something ails it now; the spot is curs'd.

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You see these lifeless stumps of aspin wood,
Some say that they are beeches, others elms,
These were the Bower; and here a Mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms.

The arbour does its own condition tell,
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream,
But as to the great Lodge, you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And, oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I've guess'd, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

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What thoughts must through the creature's brain have
pass'd!
To this place from the stone upon the steep
Are but three bounds, and look, Sir, at this last!
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lull'd by this fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wander'd from his mother's side.

In April here beneath the scented thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing,
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

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But now here's neither grass nor pleasant shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone:
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain all are gone."

"Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine;
This beast not unobserv'd by Nature fell,
His death was mourn'd by sympathy divine.

The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For them the quiet creatures whom he loves.

The Pleasure-house is dust:—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

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She leaves these objects to a slow decay
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shews, and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

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There was a Boy, ye knew him well, ye Cliffs
And Islands of Winander! many a time,
At evening, when the stars had just begun
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake,
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Press'd closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
That they might answer him. And they would shout
Across the wat'ry vale and shout again
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled, a wild scene

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Of mirth and jocund din. And, when it chanced
That pauses of deep silence mock'd his skill,
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprize
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents, or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, receiv'd
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

Fair are the woods, and beauteous is the spot,
The vale where he was born: the Church-yard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school,
And there along that bank when I have pass'd
At evening, I believe, that near his grave
A full half-hour together I have stood,
Mute——for he died when he was ten years old.

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THE

BROTHERS,

A PASTORAL POEM.

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*The BROTHERS.**

These Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as their summer lasted; some, as wise,
Upon the forehead of a jutting crag
Sit perch'd with book and pencil on their knee,
And look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.

* This Poem was intended to be the concluding poem of a series of pastorals, the scene of which was laid among the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland. I mention this to apologise for the abruptness with which the poem begins.

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But, for that moping son of Idleness
Why can he tarry *yonder?*—In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tomb-stone nor name, only the turf we tread,
And a few natural graves. To Jane, his Wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening, and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage, as it chanced that day,
Employ'd in winter's work. Upon the stone
His Wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While, from the twin cards tooth'd with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who turn'd her large round wheel in the open air
With back and forward steps. Towards the field
In which the parish chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder, and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snowy ridge

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Of carded wool which the old Man had piled
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other lock'd; and, down the path
Which from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'Twas one well known to him in former days,
A Shepherd-lad: who ere his thirteenth year
Had chang'd his calling, with the mariners
A fellow-mariner, and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been rear'd
Among the mountains, and he in his heart
Was half a Shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees; and when the regular wind
Between the tropics fill'd the steady sail
And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
Lengthening invisibly its weary line

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Along the cloudless main, he, in those hours
Of tiresome indolence would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze,
And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam
Flash'd round him images and hues, that wrought
In union with the employment of his heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep
Saw mountains, saw the forms of sheep that graz'd
On verdant hills, with dwellings among trees,
And Shepherds clad in the same country grey
Which he himself had worn.*

And now at length,
From perils manifold, with some small wealth
Acquir'd by traffic in the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is return'd,

* This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, Author of the Hurricane.

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With a determin'd purpose to resume
The life which he liv'd there, both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother Shepherds on their native hills.
—— They were the last of all their race; and now,
When Leonard had approach'd his home, his heart
Fail'd in him, and, not venturing to inquire
Tidings of one whom he so dearly lov'd,
Towards the church-yard he had turn'd aside,
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother liv'd, or to the file
Another grave was added.—He had found
Another grave, near which a full half hour
He had remain'd, but, as he gaz'd, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt, and he had hopes

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That he had seen this heap of turf before,
That it was not another grave, but one,
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale he came that afternoon,
Through fields which once had been well known to him.
And Oh! what joy the recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
And looking round he thought that he perceiv'd
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And the eternal hills, themselves were chang'd.

By this the Priest who down the field had come
Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopp'd short, and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
He scann'd him with a gay complacency.
Aye, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
Of the world's business, to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday,

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The happy man will creep about the fields
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write Fool upon his forehead. Planted thus
Beneath a shed that overarch'd the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appear'd
The good man might have commun'd with himself
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approach'd; he recogniz'd the Priest at once,
And after greetings interchang'd, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

LEONARD.

You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life:
Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remember'd. Scarce a funeral
Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months;

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And yet, some changes must take place among you,
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten
We are not all that perish.——I remember,
For many years ago I pass'd this road,
There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had.

PRIEST.

Why, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—

LEONARD.

But, surely, yonder—

PRIEST.

Aye, there indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false.—On that tall pike,
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two Springs which bubbled side by side,

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As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: ten years back,
Close to those brother fountains, the huge crag
Was rent with lightning — one is dead and gone,
The other, left behind, is flowing still.——
For accidents and changes such as these,
Why we have store of them! a water spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract—a sharp May storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens, or a Shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge—
A wood is fell'd:—and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christen'd, a field plough'd,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house cloth is deck'd with a new face;

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And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries, one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side,
Your's was a stranger's judgment: for historians
Commend me to these vallies.

LEONARD.

Yet your church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past.
Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones or skull, type of our earthly state
Or emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture field.

PRIEST.

Why there, Sir, is a thought that's new to me.
The Stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
If every English church-yard were like ours:
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth.

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We have no need of names and epitaphs,
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
And then for our immortal part, *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains:

LEONARD.

Your dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these Graves?

PRIEST.

With what I've witness'd, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might, and, on a winter's evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round,
Yet all in the broad high-way of the world.
Now there's a grave—your foot is half upon it,

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It looks just like the rest, and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

LEONARD.

'Tis a common case,
We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves;—
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

PRIEST.

That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produc'd by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
For five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflow'd the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage,
You see it yonder, and those few green fields.
They toil'd and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before

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A little—yet a little—and old Walter,
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burthens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still preserv'd
A chearful mind, and buffeted with bond,
Interest and mortgages; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurr'd him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
His pace was never that of an old man:
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two Grandsons after him—but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel, and in these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer—

LEONARD.

But these two Orphans!

PRIEST.

Orphans! such they were—

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Yet not while Walter liv'd—for, though their Parents
Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old Man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears
Shed, when he talk'd of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man in the day of his old age
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
Aye. You may turn that way—it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

LEONARD.

These Boys I hope
They lov'd this good old Man—

PRIEST.

They did—and truly,
But that was what we almost overlook'd,

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They were such darlings of each other. For
Though from their cradles they had liv'd with Walter,
The only kinsman near them in the house,
Yet he being old, they had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them! from their house the School
Was distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
And unbridg'd stream, such as you may have notic'd
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys perhaps
Remain'd at home, go staggering through the fords
Bearing his Brother on his back.—I've seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Aye, more than once I've seen him mid-leg deep,
Their two books lying both on a dry stone
Upon the hither side:—and once I said,

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As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety—

LEONARD.

It may be then—

PRIEST.

Never did worthier lads break English bread:
The finest Sunday that the Autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep these boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.
Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks and every hollow place
Where foot could come, to one or both of them
Was known as well as to the flowers that grew there.
Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills:
They play'd like two young ravens on the crags:
Then they could write, aye and speak too, as well

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As many of their betters—and for Leonard!
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager twenty pounds,
That, if he is alive, he has it yet.

LEONARD.

It seems, these Brothers have not liv'd to be
A comfort to each other.—

PRIEST.

That they might
Live to that end, is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wish'd,
And what, for my part, I have often pray'd:
But Leonard—

LEONARD.

Then James still is left among you—

PRIEST.

'Tis of the elder Brother I am speaking:

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They had an Uncle, he was at that time
A thriving man, and traffick'd on the seas:
And, but for this same Uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud.
For the Boy lov'd the life which we lead here;
And, though a very Stripling, twelve years old;
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
The estate and house were sold, and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years.
Well—all was gone, and they were destitute.
And Leonard, chiefly for his brother's sake,
Resolv'd to try his fortune on the seas.
'Tis now twelve years since we had tidings from him.
If there was one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,

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From the great Gavel*, down by Leeza's Banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a very festival,
And those two bells of ours, which there you see
Hanging in the open air—but, O good Sir!
This is sad talk—they'll never sound for him
Living or dead—When last we heard of him
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary Coast—'Twas not a little
That would bring down his spirit, and, no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Lad

---

* The great Gavel, so called I imagine, from its resemblance to the Gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a River which follows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

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Was sadly cross'd—Poor Leonard! when we parted,
He took me by the hand and said to me,
If ever the day came when he was rich,
He would return, and on his Father's Land
He would grow old among us.

LEONARD.

If that day
Should come, 'twould needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be as happy then
As any that should meet him—

PRIEST.

Happy, Sir—

LEONARD.

You said his kindred all were in their graves,
And that he had one Brother—

PRIEST.

That is but

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A fellow tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate,
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain boy
In him was somewhat check'd, and when his Brother
Was gone to sea and he was left alone
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek, he droop'd, and pin'd and pin'd:

LEONARD.

But these are all the graves of full grown men!

PRIEST.

Aye, Sir, that pass'd away: we took him to us.
He was the child of all the dale—he liv'd
Three months with one, and six months with another:
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love,
And many, many happy days were his.

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But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And, when he liv'd beneath our roof, we found
(A practice till this time unknown to him),
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
He sought his Brother Leonard—You are mov'd!
Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
I judg'd you most unkindly.

LEONARD.

But this youth,
How did he die at last?

PRIEST.

One sweet May morning,
It will be twelve years since, when Spring returns,
He had gone forth among the new-dropp'd lambs,
With two or three companions whom it chanc'd
Some further business summon'd to a house

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Which stands at the Dale-head. James, tir'd perhaps,
Or from some other cause remain'd behind.
You see yon precipice—it almost looks
Like some vast building made of many crags,
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our Shepherds it is call'd, the Pillar.
James, pointing to its summit, over which
They all had purpos'd to return together,
Inform'd them that he there would wait for them:
They parted, and his comrades pass'd that way
Some two hours after, but they did not find him
At the appointed place, a circumstance
Of which they took no heed: but one of them,
Going by chance, at night, into the house
Which at this time was James's home, there learn'd
That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still, he was unheard of:
The neighbours were alarm'd, and to the Brook
Some went, and some towards the Lake; ere noon

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They found him at the foot of that same Rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Lad, and there he lies.

LEONARD.

And that then *is* his grave! — Before his death
You said that he saw many happy years?

PRIEST.

Aye, that he did—

LEONARD.

And all went well with him—

PRIEST.

If he had one, the Lad had twenty homes.

LEONARD.

And you believe then, that his mind was easy—

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PRIEST.

Yes, long before he died, he found that time
Is a true friend to sorrow, and unless
His thoughts were turn'd on Leonard's luckless fortune,
He talk'd about him with a chearful love.

LEONARD

He could not come to an unhallow'd end!

PRIEST.

Nay, God forbid! You recollect I mention'd
A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him, and we all conjectur'd
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
Upon the grass, and, waiting for his comrades
He there had fallen asleep, that in his sleep
He to the margin of the precipice
Had walk'd, and from the summit had fallen head-long,
And so no doubt he perish'd: at the time,
We guess, that in his hands he must have had

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His Shepherd's staff; for midway in the cliff
It had been caught, and there for many years
It hung—and moulder'd there.

The Priest here ended—
The Stranger would have thank'd him, but he felt
Tears rushing in; both left the spot in silence,
And Leonard, when they reach'd the church-yard gate,
As the Priest lifted up the latch, turn'd round,
And, looking at the grave, he said, "My Brother."
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
Pointing towards the Cottage, he entreated
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thank'd him with a fervent voice,
But added, that, the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reach'd a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopp'd short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, review'd
All that the Priest had said: his early years

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Were with him in his heart: his cherish'd hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All press'd on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seem'd
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquish'd all his purposes.
He travell'd on to Egremont; and thence,
That night, address'd a letter to the Priest
Reminding him of what had pass'd between them,
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart,
He had not dared to tell him, who he was.

This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey headed Mariner.

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ELLEN IRWIN,

*Or the BRAES of KIRTLE.**

Fair Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the Braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian Maid
Adorn'd with wreaths of myrtle.
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,
And there did they beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

* The Kirtle is a River in the Southern part of Scotland, on whose banks the events here related took place.

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From many Knights and many Squires
The Bruce had been selected,
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble Youth!
For it may be proclaim'd with truth,
If Bruce hath lov'd sincerely,
The Gordon loves as dearly.

But what is Gordon's beauteous face?
And what are Gordon's crosses
To them who sit by Kirtle's Braes
Upon the verdant mosses?
Alas that ever he was born!
The Gordon, couch'd behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing,
Beholds them bless'd and blessing.

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Proud Gordon cannot bear the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,
And, starting up, to Bruce's heart
He launch'd a deadly jav'lin!
Fair Ellen saw it when it came,
And, stepping forth to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The Youth her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
Thus from the heart of her true-love
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sail'd away to Spain,
And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish Crescent.

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But many days and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched Knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing:
So coming back across the wave,
Without a groan on Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkonnel church-yard view
The grave of lovely Ellen:
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid,
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn Hic jacet.

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Strange fits of passion I have known,
And I will dare to tell,
But in the lover's ear alone,
What once to me befel.

When she I lov'd, was strong and gay
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening moon.

Upon the moon I fix'd my eye,
All over the wide lea;
My horse trudg'd on, and we drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

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And now we reach'd the orchard plot,
And, as we climb'd the hill,
Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
The moon descended still.

In one of these sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And, all the while, my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse mov'd on; hoof after hoof
He rais'd and never stopp'd:
When down behind the cottage roof
At once the planet dropp'd.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head—
"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

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SONG.

She dwelt among th' untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love.

A Violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the Eye!
— Fair, as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky!

She *liv'd* unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceas'd to be;
But she is in her Grave, and Oh!
The difference to me.

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A slumber did my spirit seal,
I had no human fears:
She seem'd a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force
She neither hears nor sees
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees!

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The WATERFALL and the EGLANTINE.

"Begone, thou fond presumptuous Elf,
Exclaim'd a thundering Voice,
Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!
A falling Water swoln with snows
Thus spake to a poor Briar-rose,
That all bespatter'd with his foam,
And dancing high, and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home.

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" Dost thou presume my course to block ?
Off, off ! or, puny Thing !
I'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling."
The Flood was tyrannous and strong ;
The patient Briar suffer'd long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be pass'd :
But seeing no relief, at last
He ventur'd to reply.

" Ah !" said the Briar, " Blame me not !
Why should we dwell in strife ?
We who in this, our natal spot,
Once liv'd a happy life !
You stirr'd me on my rocky bed—
What pleasure thro' my veins you spread !
The Summer long from day to day
My leaves you freshen'd and bedew'd ;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

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When Spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreath to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours
I shelter'd you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves now shed and gone
The linnet lodg'd and for us two
Chaunted his pretty songs when you
Had little voice or none.

But now proud thoughts are in your breast—
What grief is mine you see.
Ah! would you think, ev'n yet how blest
Together we might be!
Though of both leaf and flower bereft,
Some ornaments to me are left—
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I in my humble way
Would deck you many a Winter's day,
A happy Eglantine!"

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What more he said, I cannot tell.
The stream came thundering down the dell
And gallop'd loud and fast;
I listen'd, nor aught else could hear,
The Briar quak'd and much I fear,
Those accents were his last.

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The OAK and the BROOM,

A PASTORAL.

His simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.
One winter's night when through the Trees
The wind was thundering, on his knees
His youngest born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy quire
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This Tale the Shepherd told.

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I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon—
The thaw-wind with the breath of June
Breath'd gently from the warm South-west;
When in a voice sedate with age
This Oak, half giant and half sage,
His neighbour thus address'd.

"Eight weary weeks, thro' rock and clay,
Along this mountain's edge
The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up, and think, above your head
What trouble surely will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a Thing as you!

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Even such as this may be my lot:
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favor'd plant!
The Spring for me a garland weaves
Of yellow flowers and verdant leaves,
And, when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That You might look on me and say
This plant can never die.

The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my Blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew,
Beneath my shade the mother ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love, they to each other make,
And the sweet joy, which they partake,
It is a joy to me."

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Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renew'd.
But in the branches of the Oak
Two Ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling Bees
To feed and murmur there.

One night the Wind came from the North
And blew a furious blast,
At break of day I ventur'd forth
And near the Cliff I pass'd.
The storm had fall'n upon the Oak
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirl'd and whirl'd him far away;
And in one hospitable Cleft
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day.

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LUCY GRAY.

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray,
And when I cross'd the Wild,
I chanc'd to see at break of day
The solitary Child.

No Mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wild Moor,
The sweetest Thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the Fawn at play,
The Hare upon the Green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

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"To-night will be a stormy night,
You to the Town must go,
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your Mother thro' the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do;
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The Minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the Moon."

At this the Father rais'd his hook
And snapp'd a faggot-band;
He plied his work, and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe,
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powd'ry snow
That rises up like smoke.

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The storm came on before its time,
She wander'd up and down,
And many a hill did Lucy climb
But never reach'd the Town.

The wretched Parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlook'd the Moor;
And thence they saw the Bridge of Wood
A furlong from their door.

And now they homeward turn'd, and cry'd
"In Heaven we all shall meet!
When in the snow the Mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Digitized by Google

Then downward from the steep hill's edge
They track'd the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn-hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they cross'd,
The marks were still the same;
They track'd them on, nor ever lost,
And to the Bridge they came.

They follow'd from the snowy bank
The footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank,
And further there were none.

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living Child,
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome Wild.

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O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

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The IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS,

OR

*DUNGEON-GILL FORCE,**

A PASTORAL.

I.

The valley rings with mirth and joy,
Among the hills the Echoes play
A never, never ending song
To welcome in the May.
The Magpie chatters with delight;

* Gill in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland is a short and for the most part a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. Force is the word universally employed in these dialects for Waterfall.

Digitized by Google

The mountain Raven's youngling Brood
Have left the Mother and the Nest,
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food,
Or thro' the glittering Vapors dart
In very wantonness of Heart.

II.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two Boys are sitting in the sun;
It seems they have no work to do
Or that their work is done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas Hymn,
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call Stag-horn, or Fox's Tail
Their rusty Hats they trim:
And thus as happy as the Day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

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III.

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chaunts a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the Wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and more than all,
Those Boys with their green Coronal,
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Gill.

IV.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
"Down to the stump of yon old yew
I'll run with you a race."—No more—
Away the Shepherds flew:
They leapt, they ran, and when they came

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Right opposite to Dungeon-Gill,
Seeing, that he should lose the prize,
" Stop !" to his comrade Walter cries—
James stopp'd with no good will :
Said Walter then, " Your task is here,
'Twill keep you working half a year.

V.

Till you have cross'd where I shall cross,
Say that you'll neither sleep nor eat."
James proudly took him at his word,
But did not like the feat.
It was a spot, which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go :
Into a chasm a mighty Block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock ;
The gulph is deep below,
And in a bason black and small
Receives a lofty Waterfall.

Digitized by Google

VI.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The Challenger began his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gain'd
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan—
Again! his heart within him dies—
His pulse is stopp'd, his breath is lost,
He totters, pale as any ghost,
And, looking down, he spies
A Lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

VII.

The Lamb had slipp'd into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The Cataract had borne him down
Into the gulph profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,

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She saw him down the torrent borne;
And while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The Lamb, still swimming round and round
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

VIII.

When he had learnt, what thing it was,
That sent this rueful cry; I ween,
The Boy recover'd heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferr'd their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid—
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither stray'd;
And there the helpless Lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompass'd round.

Digitized by Google

IX.

He drew it gently from the pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the Lamb they took,
Said they, "He's neither maim'd nor scarr'd"—
Then up the steep ascent they hied
And placed him at his Mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

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'Tis said, that some have died for love:
And here and there a church-yard grave is found
In the cold North's unhallow'd ground,
Because the wretched man himself had slain,
His love was such a grievous pain.
And there is one whom I five years have known;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side.
He loved——The pretty Barbara died,
And thus he makes his moan:
Three years had Barbara in her grave been laid
When thus his moan he made.

Digitized by Google

Oh! move thou Cottage from behind that oak
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the Heavens depart:
I look—the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on my heart.

O! what a weight is in these shades! Ye leaves,
When will that dying murmur be suppress'd?
Your sound my heart of peace bereaves,
It robs my heart of rest.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud and loud and free,
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or chuse another tree

Digitized by Google

Roll back, sweet rill! back to thy mountain bounds,
And there for ever be thy waters chain'd!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustain'd;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb!—
Be any thing, sweet rill, but that which thou art now.

Thou Eglantine whose arch so proudly towers
(Even like a rainbow spanning half the vale)
Thou one fair shrub, oh! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale.
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,
Disturbs me, till the sight is more than I can bear.

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The man who makes this feverish complaint
Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipp'd from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy face
Turn from me, gentle Love, nor let me walk
Within the sound of Emma's voice, or know
Such happiness as I have known to-day.

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POOR SUSAN.

At the corner of Wood-Street, when day-light appears,
There's a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has pass'd by the spot and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripp'd with her pail,
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The only one dwelling on earth that she loves.

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She looks, and her heart is in Heaven, but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade;
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all pass'd away from her eyes.

Poor Outcast! return—to receive thee once more
The house of thy Father will open its door,
And thou once again, in thy plain russet gown,
May'st hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own.

Digitized by Google

INSCRIPTION

For the Spot where the HERMITAGE stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwent-Water.

If thou in the dear love of some one friend
Hast been so happy, that thou know'st what thoughts
Will, sometimes, in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot.——St. Herbert hither came
And here, for many seasons, from the world
Remov'd, and the affections of the world
He dwelt in solitude. He living here,
This island's sole inhabitant! had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man lov'd
As his own soul; and when within his cave
Alone he knelt before the crucifix
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore

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Peal'd to his orisons, and when he pac'd
Along the beach of this small isle and thought
Of his Companion, he had pray'd that both
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So pray'd he :—as our Chronicles report,
Though here the Hermit number'd his last days,
Far from St. Cuthbert his beloved friend,
Those holy men both died in the same hour.

Digitized by Google

INSCRIPTION

For the House (an Outhouse) on the Island at Grasmere.

Rude is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have maintain'd
Proportions more harmonious, and approach'd
To somewhat of a closer fellowship
With the ideal grace. Yet as it is
Do take it in good part; for he, the poor
Vitruvius of our village, had no help
From the great city; never on the leaves
Of red Morocco folio saw display'd
The skeletons and pre-existing ghosts
Of Beauties yet unborn, the rustic Box,
Snug Cot, with Coach-house, Shed and Hermitage.
It is a homely pile, yet to these walls

Digitized by Google

The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and here
The new-dropp'd lamb finds shelter from the wind.
And hither does one Poet sometimes row
His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-piled
With plenteous store of heath and wither'd fern,
A lading which he with his sickle cuts
Among the mountains, and beneath this roof
He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unborn, the sheep
Panting beneath the burthen of their wool
Lie round him, even as if they were a part
Of his own household: nor, while from his bed
He through that door-place looks toward the lake
And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep,
Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy.

Digitized by Google

To a SEXTON.

Let thy wheel-barrow alone.
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bone-house bone on bone?
'Tis already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid.
These died in peace each with the other,
Father, Sister, Friend, and Brother.

Mark the spot to which I point!
From this platform eight feet square
Take not even a finger-joint:
Andrew's whole fire-side is there.

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Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly Daughter lies
From weakness, now, and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride,
How he glories, when he sees
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families.
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, old Grey-beard! art the Warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there and Susan here,
Neighbours in mortality.

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And should I live through sun and rain
Seven widow'd years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Lov'd and Lover!

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ANDREW JONES.

I hate that Andrew Jones: he'll breed
His children up to waste and pillage.
I wish the press-gang or the drum
With its tantara sound would come,
And sweep him from the village!

I said not this, because he loves
Through the long day to swear and tipple;
But for the poor dear sake of one
To whom a foul deed he had done,
A friendless Man, a travelling Cripple!

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For this poor crawling helpless wretch
Some Horseman who was passing by,
A penny on the ground had thrown;
But the poor Cripple was alone
And could not stoop—no help was nigh.

Inch-thick the dust lay on the ground
For it had long been droughty weather:
So with his staff the Cripple wrought
Among the dust till he had brought
The halfpennies together.

It chanc'd that Andrew pass'd that way
Just at the time; and there he found
The Cripple in the mid-day heat
Standing alone, and at his feet
He saw the penny on the ground.

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He stopp'd and took the penny up:
And when the Cripple nearer drew,
Quoth Andrew, "Under half-a-crown,
What a man finds is all his own,
And so, my Friend, good day to you."

And *hence* I said, that Andrew's boys
Will all be train'd to waste and pillage;
And wish'd the press-gang, or the drum
With its tantara sound, would come
And sweep him from the village!

Digitized by Google

The TWO THIEVES,

Or the last Stage of AVARICE.

Oh now that the genius of Bewick were mine
And the skill which he learn'd on the Banks of the Tyne;
When the Muses might deal with me just as they chose
For I'd take my last leave both of verse and of prose.

What feats would I work with my magical hand!
Book-learning and books should be banish'd the land
And for hunger and thirst and such troublesome calls
Every ale-house should then have a feast on its walls.

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The Traveller would hang his wet clothes on a chair
Let them smoke, let them burn, not a straw would he care,
For the Prodigal Son, Joseph's Dream and his Sheaves,
Oh what would they be to my tale of two Thieves!

Little Dan is unbreech'd, he is three birth-days old,
His Grandsire that age more than thirty times told,
There's ninety good seasons of fair and foul weather
Between them, and both go a stealing together.

With chips is the Carpenter strewing his floor?
Is a cart-load of peats at an old Woman's door?
Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will slide,
And his Grandson's as busy at work by his side.

Old Daniel begins, he stops short and his eye
Through the lost look of dotage is cunning and sly.
'Tis a look which at this time is hardly his own,
But tells a plain tale of the days that are flown.

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Dan once had a heart which was mov'd by the wires
Of manifold pleasures and many desires:
And what if he cherish'd his purse? 'Twas no more
Than treading a path trod by thousands before.

'Twas a path trod by thousands, but Daniel is one
Who went something farther than others have gone;
And now with old Daniel you see how it fares
You see to what end he has brought his grey hairs.

The pair sally forth hand in hand; ere the sun
Has peer'd o'er the beeches their work is begun:
And yet into whatever sin they may fall,
This Child but half knows it and that not at all.

They hunt through the street with deliberate tread,
And each in his turn is both leader and led;
And wherever they carry their plots and their wiles,
Every face in the village is dimpled with smiles.

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Neither check'd by the rich nor the needy they roam,
For grey-headed Dan has a daughter at home;
Who will gladly repair all the damage that's done,
And three, were it ask'd, would be render'd for one.

Old Man! whom so oft I with pity have ey'd,
I love thee and love the sweet boy at thy side:
Long yet may'st thou live, for a teacher we see
That lifts up the veil of our nature in thee.

Digitized by Google

A whirl-blast from behind the hill
Rush'd o'er the wood with startling sound:
Then all at once the air was still,
And showers of hail-stones patter'd round.
Where leafless Oaks tower'd high above,
I sate within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green,
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With wither'd leaves is cover'd o'er,
You could not lay a hair between:
And all the year the bower is green.
But see! where'er the hailstones drop
The wither'd leaves all skip and hop,
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and every where

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Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, that jump and spring,
Were each a joyous, living thing.

Oh! grant me Heaven a heart at ease
That I may never cease to find,
Even in appearances like these
Enough to nourish and to stir my mind!

Digitized by Google

SONG

FOR THE

WANDERING JEW.

Though the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Though almost with eagle pinion
O'er the rocks the Chamois roam,
Yet he has some small dominion
Which no doubt he calls his home.

If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less he loves his haven
On the bosom of the cliff.

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Though the Sea-horse in the ocean
Own no dear domestic cave;
Yet he slumbers without motion
On the calm and silent wave.

Day and night my toils redouble!
Never nearer to the goal,
Night and day, I feel the trouble,
Of the Wanderer in my soul.

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RUTH.

Digitized by Google

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RUTH.

When Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And so, not seven years old,
The slighted Child at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill
In thoughtless freedom bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw
And from that oaten pipe could draw
All sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An Infant of the woods.

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There came a Youth from Georgia's shore,
A military Casque he wore
With splendid feathers drest;
He brought them from the Cherokees;
The feathers nodded in the breeze
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
Ah no! he spake the English tongue
And bare a Soldier's name;
And when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy
He cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak.
—While he was yet a Boy
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run
Had been his dearest joy.

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He was a lovely Youth! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he;
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear,
Such tales as told to any Maid
By such a Youth in the green shade
Were perilous to hear.

He told of Girls, a happy rout,
Who quit their fold with dance and shout
Their pleasant Indian Town
To gather strawberries all day long,
Returning with a choral song
When day-light is gone down.

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He spake of plants divine and strange
That ev'ry day their blossoms change,
Ten thousand lovely hues!
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the Magnolia,† spread
High as a cloud, high over head!
The Cypress and her spire,
Of *flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues and seem
To set the hills on fire.

† Magnolia grandiflora.

* The splendid appearance of these scarlet flowers, which are scattered with such profusion over the Hills in the Southern parts of North America is frequently mentioned by Bartram in his Travels.

Digitized by Google

The Youth of green Savannahs spake,
And many an endless endless lake
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds :

And then he said " How sweet it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
A gardener in the shade,
Still wandering with an easy mind
To build a household fire and find
A home in every glade.

What days and what sweet years ! Ah me !
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So pass'd in quiet bliss,
And all the while" said he " to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this !

Digitized by Google

And then he sometimes interwove
Dear thoughts about a Father's love,
" For there," said he, " are spun
Around the heart such tender ties
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

Sweet Ruth ! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear ;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side
And drive the flying deer.

Beloved Ruth !" No more he said
Sweet Ruth alone at midnight shed
A solitary tear,
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

Digitized by Google

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the Church our faith will plight,
A Husband and a Wife."
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods
And green Savannahs she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive gay and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roam'd about with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

Digitized by Google

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth so much of Heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seem'd allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less to feed voluptuous thought
The beauteous forms of Nature wrought,
Fair trees and lovely flowers;
The breezes their own languor lent,
The stars had feelings which they sent
Into those magic bowers.

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Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween,
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions link'd to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he liv'd, much evil saw
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately and undeceiv'd
Those wild men's vices he receiv'd,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impair'd, and he became
The slave of low desires;
A man who without self-controul
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

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And yet he with no feign'd delight
Had woo'd the Maiden, day and night
Had lov'd her, night and morn;
What could he less than love a Maid
Whose heart with so much nature play'd
So kind and so forlorn?

But now the pleasant dream was gone,
No hope, no wish remain'd, not one,
They stirr'd him now no more,
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wish'd to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came, the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

Digitized by Google

" God help thee Ruth !"—Such pains she had
That she in half a year was mad
And in a prison hous'd,
And there, exulting in her wrongs,
Among the music of her songs
She fearfully carouz'd.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May,
They all were with her in her cell,
And a wild brook with chearful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain
There came a respite to her pain,
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought,
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

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Among the fields she breath'd again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free,
And to the pleasant Banks of Tone*
She took her way, to dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her grief, the tools
That shap'd her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves, she loved them still,
Nor ever tax'd them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

---

* The Tone is a River of Somersetshire at no great distance from the Quantock Hills. These Hills, which are alluded to a few Stanzas below, are extremely beautiful, and in most places richly covered with Coppice woods.

Digitized by Google

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies,
But till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And in this tale we all agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

If she is press'd by want of food
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road side,
And there she begs at one steep place,
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute
Or thrown away, but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers;
This flute made of a hemlock stalk
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock Woodman hears.

Digitized by Google

I, too have pass'd her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild,
Such small machinery as she turn'd
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourn'd
A young and happy Child!

Farewel! and when thy days are told
Ill-fated Ruth! in hallow'd mold
Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

Digitized by Google

LINES

Written with a Slate-pencil upon a Stone, the largest of a heap lying near a deserted Quarry, upon one of the Islands at Rydale.

Stranger! this hillock of mishapen stones
Is not a ruin of the ancient time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st, the Cairn
Of some old British Chief: 'tis nothing more
Than the rude embryo of a little dome
Or pleasure-house, which was to have been built
Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanc'd, Sir William having learn'd
That from the shore a full-grown man might wade,
And make himself a freeman of this spot

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At any hour he chose, the Knight forthwith
Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinish'd task.——
The block on which these lines are trac'd, perhaps,
Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of the intended pile, which would have been
Some quaint odd play-thing of elaborate skill,
So that, I guess, the linnet and the thrush,
And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wonder'd at the work. But blame him not,
For old Sir William was a gentle Knight
Bred in this vale to which he appertain'd
With all his ancestry. Then peace to him
And for the outrage which he had devis'd
Entire forgiveness.—— But if thou art one
On fire with thy impatience to become
An Inmate of these mountains, if disturb'd
By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
Out of the quiet rock the elements

Digitized by Google

Of thy trim mansion destin'd soon to blaze
In snow-white splendour, think again, and taught
By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
Thy fragments to the bramble and the rose,
There let the vernal slow-worm sun himself,
And let the red-breast hop from stone to stone.

Digitized by Google

In the School of ——— is a tablet on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the names of the several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite one of those names the Author wrote the following lines.

If Nature, for a favorite Child
In thee hath temper'd so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

Digitized by Google

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cypher and syllable, thine eye
Has travell'd down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And if a sleeping tear should wake
Then be it neither check'd nor stay'd:
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool,
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heav'd were sighs
Of one tir'd out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the oil of gladness.

Digitized by Google

Yet sometimes when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round
It seem'd as if he drank it up,
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould,
Thou happy soul, and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee?

Digitized by Google

THE

Two APRIL MORNINGS.

We walk'd along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun,
And Matthew stopp'd, he look'd, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village Schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travell'd merrily to pass
A day among the hills.

Digitized by Google

" Our work," said I, " was well begun ;
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought ?

A second time did Matthew stop,
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top
To me he made reply.

Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

And on that slope of springing corn
The self-same crimson hue
Fell from the sky that April morn,
The same which now I view !

Digitized by Google

With rod and line my silent sport
I plied by Derwent's wave,
And, coming to the church, stopp'd short
Beside my Daughter's grave.

Nine summers had she scarcely seen
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang!—she would have been
A very nightingale.

Six feet in earth my Emma lay,
And yet I lov'd her more,
For so it seem'd, than till that day
I e'er had lov'd before.

And, turning from her grave, I met
Beside the church-yard Yew
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

Digitized by Google

A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white,
To see a Child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripp'd with foot so free,
She seem'd as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I look'd at her and look'd again;
—And did not wish her mine.

Matthew is in his grave, yet now
Methinks I see him stand,
As at that moment, with his bough
Of wilding in his hand.

Digitized by Google

The FOUNTAIN,

A Conversation.

We talk'd with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of Friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat,
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

Now, Matthew, let us try to match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old Border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon.

Digitized by Google

Or of the Church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!

On silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-hair'd Man of glee.

"Down to the vale this water steers,
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot chuse but think
How oft, a vigorous Man, I lay
Beside this Fountain's brink.

Digitized by Google

My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd,
For the same sound is in my ears,
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

The blackbird in the summer trees,
The lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

Digitized by Google

But we are press'd by heavy laws,
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

If there is one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The houshold hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approv'd,
And many love me, but by none
Am I enough belov'd."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains,

Digitized by Google

And, Matthew, for thy Children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasp'd his hands, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side,
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide,
And through the wood we went,

And, ere we came to Leonard's Rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock
And the bewilder'd chimes.

Digitized by Google

NUTTING.

——————— It seems a day,
One of those heavenly days which cannot die,
When forth I sallied from our cottage-door,*
And with a wallet o'er my shoulder slung,
A nutting crook in hand, I turn'd my steps
Towards the distant woods, a Figure quaint,
Trick'd out in proud disguise of Beggar's weeds
Put on for the occasion, by advice
And exhortation of my frugal Dame.

* The house at which I was boarded during the time I was at School.

Digitized by Google

Motley accoutrements! of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, and, in truth,
More ragged than need was. Among the woods,
And o'er the pathless rocks, I forc'd my way
Until, at length, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Droop'd with its wither'd leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation, but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with milk-white clusters hung,
A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet, or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I play'd;
A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been bless'd
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.—
—Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear

Digitized by Google

And fade, unseen by any human eye,
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever, and I saw the sparkling foam,
And with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleec'd with moss, beneath the shady trees,
Lay round me scatter'd like a flock of sheep,
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease, and, of its joy secure
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragg'd to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower
Deform'd and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past,
Even then, when from the bower I turn'd away,
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings

Digitized by Google

I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees and the intruding sky.—

Then, dearest Maiden! move along these shades
In gentleness of heart with gentle hand
Touch,—— for there is a Spirit in the woods.

Digitized by Google

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take,
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse, and with me
The Girl in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

Digitized by Google

She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs,
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her, for her the willow bend,
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
A beauty that shall mould her form
By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her, and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

Digitized by Google

And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell,
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell.

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene,
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

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The PET-LAMB,

A PASTORAL.

The dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;
I heard a voice, it said, Drink, pretty Creature, drink!
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied,
A snow-white mountain Lamb with a Maiden at its side.

No other sheep were near, the Lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tether'd to a stone;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden kneel,
While to that Mountain Lamb she gave its evening meal.

The Lamb while from her hand he thus his supper took
Seem'd to feast with head and ears, and his tail with pleasure shook.
"Drink, pretty Creature, drink," she said in such a tone
That I almost receiv'd her heart into my own.

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'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a Child of beauty rare,
I watch'd them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
And now with empty Can the Maiden turn'd away,
But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Towards the Lamb she look'd, and from that shady place
I unobserv'd could see the workings of her face:
If Nature to her tongue could measur'd numbers bring
Thus, thought I, to her Lamb that little Maid would sing.

"What ails thee, Young One? What? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? Well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be,
Rest little Young One, rest; what is't that aileth thee?

What is it thou would'st seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs are they not strong? And beautiful thou art:
This grass is tender grass, these flowers they have no peers,
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears.

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f the Sun is shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen chain,
his beech is standing by, its covert thou can'st gain,
or rain and mountain storms the like thou need'st not fear,
he rain and storm are things which scarcely can come here.

lest, little Young One, rest; thou hast forgot the day
When my Father found thee first in places far away:
Many flocks are on the hills, but thou wert own'd by none,
And thy Mother from thy side for evermore was gone.

He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee home,
A blessed day for thee! then whither would'st thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast, the dam that did thee yean
Upon the mountain tops no kinder could have been.

Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee in this Can
Fresh water from the brook as clear as ever ran;
And twice in the day when the ground is wet with dew
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

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Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough,
My playmate thou shalt be, and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

It will not, will not rest!—poor Creature can it be
That 'tis thy Mother's heart which is working so in thee?
Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou can'st neither see nor hear.

Alas, the mountain tops that look so green and fair!
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there,
The little brooks, that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky,
He will not come to thee, our Cottage is hard by,
Night and day thou art safe as living thing can be,
Be happy then and rest, what is't that aileth thee?

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As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat,
And it seem'd as I retrac'd the ballad line by line
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was mine.

Again, and once again did I repeat the song,
"Nay" said I, "more than half to the Damsel must belong,
For she look'd with such a look, and she spake with such a tone,
That I almost receiv'd her heart into my own."

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Written in GERMANY,

On one of the coldest days of the Century.

I must apprize the Reader that the stoves in North Germany generally have the impression of a galloping Horse upon them, this being part of the Brunswick Arms.

A fig for your languages, German and Norse,
Let me have the song of the Kettle,
And the tongs and the poker, instead of that horse
That gallops away with such fury and force
On this dreary dull plate of black metal.

Our earth is no doubt made of excellent stuff,
But her pulses beat slower and slower,
The weather in Forty was cutting and rough,
And then, as Heaven knows, the glass stood low enough,
And *now* it is four degrees lower.

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Here's a Fly, a disconsolate creature perhaps,
A child of the field, or the grove,
And sorrow for him! this dull treacherous heat
Has seduc'd the poor fool from his winter retreat,
And he creeps to the edge of my stove.

Alas! how he fumbles about the domains
Which this comfortless oven environ,
He cannot find out in what track he must crawl,
Now back to the tiles, and now back to the wall,
And now on the brink of the iron.

Stock-still there he stands like a traveller bemaz'd,
The best of his skill he has tried;
His feelers methinks I can see him put forth
To the East and the West, and the South and the North,
But he finds neither guide-post nor guide.

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See! his spindles sink under him, foot, leg and thigh,
His eyesight and hearing are lost,
Between life and death his blood freezes and thaws,
And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky gauze
Are glued to his sides by the frost.

No Brother, no Friend has he near him, while I
Can draw warmth from the cheek of my Love,
As blest and as glad in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above.

Yet, God is my witness, thou small helpless Thing,
Thy life I would gladly sustain
Till summer comes up from the South, and with crowds
Of thy brethren a march thou should'st sound through the clouds,
And back to the forests again.

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The CHILDLESS FATHER.

Up, Timothy, up with your Staff and away!
Not a soul in the village this morning will stay;
The Hare has just started from Hamilton's grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the hounds.

—Of coats and of jackets both grey, red and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours were seen,
With their comely blue aprons and caps white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday show.

The bason of box-wood,* just six months before,
Had stood on the table at Timothy's door,

* In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a bason full of Sprigs of Box-wood is placed at

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A Coffin through Timothy's threshold had pass'd,
One Child did it bear and that Child was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and the fray,
The horse and the horn, and the hark! hark away!
Old Timothy took up his Staff, and he shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he said,
"The key I must take, for my Ellen is dead"
But of this in my ears not a word did he speak,
And he went to the chase with a tear on his cheek.

---

the door of the house from which the Coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a Sprig of this Box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

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THE OLD

CUMBERLAND BEGGAR.

A DESCRIPTION.

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The OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR,

A DESCRIPTION.

The class of Beggars to which the old man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received charity; sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I saw an aged Beggar in my walk,
And he was seated by the highway side
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone

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That overlays the pile, and from a bag
All white with flour the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one,
And scann'd them with a fix'd and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sate, and eat his food in solitude;
And ever, scatter'd from his palsied hand,
That still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground, and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destin'd meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known, and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary man,

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So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering horseman-traveller does not throw
With careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops, that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,
But still when he has given his horse the rein
Towards the aged Beggar turns a look,
Sidelong and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged Beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The Post-boy when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar, in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind, and, if perchance
The old Man does not change his course, the Boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-side,
And passes gently by, without a curse

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Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.
He travels on, a solitary Man,
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turn'd, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground; and evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bowbent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey, seeing still,
And never knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scatter'd leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot wheel have left
Impress'd on the white road, in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
His staff trails with him, scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust, he is so still

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In look and motion that the cottage curs,
Ere he have pass'd the door, will turn away
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breech'd all pass him by:
Him even the slow-pac'd waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this man useless.——Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, and wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth. 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good, a spirit and pulse of good,

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A life and soul to every mode of being
Inseparably link'd. While thus he creeps
From door to door, the Villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity
Else unremember'd, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivous cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts
Hamlets, and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason, yet prepares that after joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursu'd

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Doth find itself insensibly dispos'd
To virtue and true goodness. Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle; minds like these,
In childhood, from this solitary being,
This helpless wanderer, have perchance receiv'd,
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door, and like the pear
Which overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Shelter'd, and flourish in a little grove

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Of their own kindred, all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

Yet further.——Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach, who of the moral law
Establish'd in the land where they abide
Are strict observers, and not negligent,

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Meanwhile, in any tenderness of heart
Or act of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor,
Go and demand of him, if there be here,
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul.
No—man is dear to man: the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been
Themselves the fathers and the dealers out
Of some small blessings, have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known
My Neighbour, when with punctual care, each week

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Duly as Friday comes, though press'd herself
By her own wants, she from her chest of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire and builds her hope in heav'n.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while, in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has led him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblam'd, uninjur'd, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of heaven
Has hung around him, and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unletter'd Villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe

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The freshness of the vallies, let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows,
And let the charter'd wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his wither'd face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never House, misnamed of industry,
Make him a captive; for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age.
Let him be free of mountain solitudes,
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures; if his eyes, which now
Have been so long familiar with the earth,
No more behold the horizontal sun
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.

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And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank
Of high-way side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gather'd meal, and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has liv'd,
So in the eye of Nature let him die.

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RURAL ARCHITECTURE.

There's George Fisher, Charles Fleming, and Reginald
Shore,
Three rosy-cheek'd School-boys, the highest not more
Than the height of a Counsellor's bag;
To the top of Great How did it please them to climb,
And there they built up without mortar or lime
A Man on the peak of the crag.

They built him of stones gather'd up as they lay,
They built him and christen'd him all in one day,
An Urchin both vigorous and hale;
And so without scruple they call'd him Ralph Jones.
Now Ralph is renown'd for the length of his bones;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

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Just half a week after the Wind sallied forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the North
Coming on with a terrible pother,
From the peak of the crag blew the Giant away.
And what did these School-boys ?—The very next day
They went and they built up another.

—Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works
In Paris and London, 'mong Christians or Turks,
Spirits busy to do and undo :
At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag.
—Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the Crag!
And I'll build up a Giant with you.

Great How is a single and conspicuous hill, which rises towards the foot of Thirl-mere, on the western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite, along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

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A POET's EPITAPH.

Art thou a Statesman, in the van
Of public business train'd and bred,
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh;
Go, carry to some other place
The hardness of thy coward eye,
The falshood of thy sallow face.

Art thou a man of purple cheer?
A rosy man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet Doctor, not too near:
This grave no cushion is for thee.

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Art thou a man of gallant pride,
A Soldier, and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a Peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? One, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapp'd closely in thy sensual fleece
O turn aside, and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy pin-point of a soul away!

—A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And He has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

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One to whose smooth-rubb'd soul can cling
Nor form nor feeling great nor small,
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All in All!

Shut close the door! press down the latch:
Sleep in thy intellectual crust,
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch,
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

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The outward shews of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley he has view'd;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak, both man and boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

—Come hither in thy hour of strength,
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave.—

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A CHARACTER,

In the antithetical Manner.

I marvel how Nature could ever find space
For the weight and the levity seen in his face:
There's thought and no thought, and there's paleness and bloom,
And bustle and sluggishness, pleasure and gloom.

There's weakness, and strength both redundant and vain;
Such strength, as if ever affliction and pain
Could pierce through a temper that's soft to disease,
Would be rational peace—a philosopher's ease.

There's indifference, alike when he fails and succeeds,
And attention full ten times as much as there needs,
Pride where there's no envy, there's so much of joy;
And mildness, and spirit both forward and coy.

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There's freedom, and sometimes a diffident stare
Of shame scarcely seeming to know that she's there.
There's virtue, the title it surely may claim,
Yet wants, heaven knows what, to be worthy the name.

What a picture! 'tis drawn without nature or art,
—Yet the Man would at once run away with your heart,
And I for five centuries right gladly would be
Such an odd, such a kind happy creature as he.

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A FRAGMENT.

Between two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowrets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a cottage hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Daniſh Boy.

In clouds above, the lark is heard,
He sings his blitheſt and his beſt;

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But in this lonesome nook the bird
Did never build his nest.
No beast, no bird hath here his home;
The bees borne on the breezy air
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers, to other dells,
Nor ever linger there.
The Danish Boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.

A spirit of noon day is he,
He seems a Form of flesh and blood;
A piping Shepherd he might be,
A Herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing;
It fears nor rain, nor wind, nor dew,
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in Spring;

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His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

A harp is from his shoulder slung;
He rests the harp upon his knee,
And there in a forgotten tongue
He warbles melody.
Of flocks and herds both far and near
He is the darling and the joy,
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain ponies prick their ears,
They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sits alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

When near this blasted tree you pass,
Two sods are plainly to be seen
Close at its root, and each with grass
Is cover'd fresh and green.

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Like turf upon a new-made grave
These two green sods together lie,
Nor heat, nor cold, nor rain, nor wind
Can these two sods together bind,
Nor sun, nor earth, nor sky,
But side by side the two are laid,
As if just sever'd by the spade.

There sits he: in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove;
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war;
They seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

* * * * * * * * * * *

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POEMS

ON THE

NAMING OF PLACES.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

By Persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents will have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents or renew the gratification of such Feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

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POEMS on the NAMING of PLACES.

I.

It was an April Morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed, and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was soften'd down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living things
Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves appear'd as if in haste
To spur the steps of June; as if their shades
Of *various* green were hindrances that stood

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Between them and their object: yet, meanwhile,
There was such deep contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, seem'd as though the countenance
With which it look'd on this delightful day
Were native to the summer.—Up the brook
I roam'd in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came
In this continuous glen, where down a rock
The stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
Which I till then had heard, appear'd the voice
Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
The Shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
Vied with this waterfall, and made a song
Which, while I listen'd, seem'd like the wild growth
Or like some natural produce of the air
That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here,

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But 'twas the foliage of the rocks, the birch,
The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
And on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain Cottage might be seen.
I gaz'd and gaz'd, and to myself I said,
"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
My Emma, I will dedicate to thee."
——Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of Emma's Dell.

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II.

To JOANNA.

Amid the smoke of cities did you pass
Your time of early youth, and there you learn'd,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fire-side,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow towards the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
Yet we who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity
Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been

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So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse
However trivial, if you thence are taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past,
Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbour, the old Steeple tower,
The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me, and when he had ask'd,
" How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid !
And when will she return to us ?" he paus'd,
And after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
Reviving obsolete Idolatry,
I like a Runic Priest, in characters
Of formidable size, had chisel'd out
Some uncouth name upon the native rock,

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Above the Rotha, by the forest side.
—Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engender'd betwixt malice and true love,
I was not loth to be so catechiz'd,
And this was my reply.—"As it befel,
One summer morning we had walk'd abroad
At break of day, Joanna and myself.
—'Twas that delightful season, when the broom,
Full flower'd, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks,
And when we came in front of that tall rock
Which looks towards the East, I there stopp'd short,
And trac'd the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force

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Of their own beauty, imag'd in the heart.
—When I had gaz'd perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laugh'd aloud.
The rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice, and laugh'd again:
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-Scar,
And the tall Steep of Silver-How sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answer'd with a mountain tone:
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
His speaking trumpet;—back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone toss'd it from his misty head.
Now whether, (said I to our cordial Friend
Who in the hey-day of astonishment
Smil'd in my face) this were in simple truth

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A work accompliſh'd by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touch'd
With dreams and visionary impulses,
Is not for me to tell; but sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And, while we both were listening, to my side
The fair Joanna drew, is if she wish'd
To shelter from some object of her fear.
—And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
Were wasted, as I chanc'd to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sun-rise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sate down, and there,
In memory of affections old and true,
I chissel'd out in those rude characters
Joanna's name upon the living stone.
And I, and all who dwell by my fire-side
Have call'd the lovely rock, Joanna's Rock."

NOTE.

In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several Inscriptions upon the native rock which from the wasting of Time and

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the rudeness of the Workmanship had been mistaken for Runic. They are without doubt Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which flowing through the Lakes of Grasmere and Rydale falls into Wyndermere. On Helm-Crag, that impressive single Mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a Rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an Old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those Fissures or Caverns, which in the language of the Country are called Dungeons. The other Mountains either immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere, or belong to the same Cluster.

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III.

There is an Eminence,—of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun.
We can behold it from our Orchard-seat,
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Cliff, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible, and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favorite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heav'ns, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.

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And She who dwells with me, whom I have lov'd
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath said, this lonesome Peak shall bear my Name.

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IV.

A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interpos'd
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy.
And there, myself and two beloved Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Saunter'd on this retir'd and difficult way.
——Ill suits the road with one in haste, but we
Play'd with our time; and, as we stroll'd along,
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had toss'd ashore,

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Feather, or leaf, or weed, or wither'd bough,
Each on the other heap'd along the line
Of the dry wreck. And in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
Which, seeming lifeless half, and half impell'd
By some internal feeling, skimm'd along
Close to the surface of the lake that lay
Asleep in a dead calm, ran closely on
Along the dead calm lake, now here, now there,
In all its sportive wanderings all the while
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its very playmate, and its moving soul.
——And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulg'd to all, we paus'd, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place

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On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall plant
So stately, of the Queen Osmunda nam'd,
Plant lovelier in its own retir'd abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naid by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere
Sole-sitting by the shores of old Romance.
——So fared we that sweet morning: from the fields
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of Reapers, Men and Women, Boys and Girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And in the fashion which I have describ'd,
Feeding unthinking fancies, we advanc'd
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze, we saw
Before us on a point of jutting land
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attir'd in peasant's garb, who stood alone

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Angling beside the margin of the lake.
That way we turn'd our steps; nor was it long,
Ere making ready comments on the sight
Which then we saw, with one and the same voice
We all cried out, that he must be indeed
An idle man, who thus could lose a day
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stor'd
Wherewith to chear him in the winter time.
Thus talking of that Peasant we approach'd
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turn'd his head
To greet us — and we saw a man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I look'd at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustain'd.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The man was using his best skill to gain

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A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was chang'd
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserv'd in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
— Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then receiv'd
The same admonishment, have call'd the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by Mariner was giv'n to Bay
Or Foreland on a new-discover'd coast,
And, POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the Name it bears.

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V.

To M. H.

Our walk was far among the ancient trees:
There was no road, nor any wood-man's path,
But the thick umbrage, checking the wild growth
Of weed and sapling, on the soft green turf
Beneath the branches of itself had made
A track which brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods.
All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
On its firm margin, even as from a well
Or some stone-bason which the Herdsman's hand
Had shap'd for their refreshment, nor did sun

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Or wind from any quarter ever come
But as a blessing to this calm recess,
This glade of water and this one green field.
The spot was made by Nature for herself:
The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
Unknown to them; but it is beautiful,
And if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts,
And, therefore, my sweet MARY, this still nook
With all its beeches we have named from You.

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MICHAEL,

A PASTORAL POEM.

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MICHAEL,

A PASTORAL POEM.

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral Mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for beside that boisterous Brook
The mountains have all open'd out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation there is seen; but such
As journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.

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It is in truth an utter solitude,
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
There is a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that place a story appertains,
Which, though it be ungarnish'd with events,
Is not unfit, I deem, for the fire-side,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first,
The earliest of those tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the vallies, men
Whom I already lov'd, not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think

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At random and imperfectly indeed
On man; the heart of man and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts,
And with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these Hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

UPON the Forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name,
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen
Intense and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his Shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.

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Hence he had learn'd the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone, and often-times
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of Bagpipers on distant Highland hills;
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say
The winds are now devising work for me!
And truly at all times the storm, that drives
The Traveller to a shelter, summon'd him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So liv'd he till his eightieth year was pass'd.

And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green Valleys, and the Streams and Rocks
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with chearful spirits he had breath'd

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The common air; the hills, which he so oft
Had climb'd with vigorous steps; which had impress'd
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which like a book preserv'd the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had sav'd,
Had fed or shelter'd, linking to such acts,
So grateful in themselves, the certainty
Of honorable gains; these fields, these hills
Which were his living Being, even more
Than his own Blood—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

He had not passed his days in singleness.
He had a Wife, a comely Matron, old
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life

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Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spining wool,
That small for flax, and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one Inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael telling o'er his years began
To deem that he was old, in Shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only son,
With two brave sheep dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their Household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then
Their labour did not cease, unless when all
Turn'd to their cleanly supper-board, and there
Each with a mess of pottage and skimm'd milk,

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Sate round their basket pil'd with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when their meal
Was ended, LUKE (for so the Son was nam'd)
And his old Father, both betook themselves
To such convenient work, as might employ
Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card
Wool for the House-wife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the cieling by the chimney's edge,
Which in our ancient uncouth country style
Did with a huge projection overbrow
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim, the House-wife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had perform'd
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn and late,
Surviving Comrade of uncounted Hours

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Which going by from year to year had found
And left the Couple neither gay perhaps
Nor chearful, yet with objects and with hopes
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when LUKE was in his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while late into the night
The House-wife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage thro' the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
Not with a waste of words, but for the sake
Of pleasure, which I know that I shall give
To many living now, I of this Lamp
Speak thus minutely: for there are no few
Whose memories will bear witness to my tale.
The Light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public Symbol of the life,
The thrifty Pair had liv'd. For, as it chanc'd,
Their Cottage on a plot of rising ground

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Stood single, with large prospect North and South,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmal-Raise,
And Westward to the village near the Lake.
And from this constant light so regular
And so far seen, the House itself by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was nam'd The Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he lov'd himself, must needs
Have lov'd his Help-mate; but to Michael's heart
This Son of his old age was yet more dear—
Effect which might perhaps have been produc'd
By that instinctive tenderness, the same
Blind Spirit, which is in the blood of all,
Or that a child, more than all other gifts,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.

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From such, and other causes, to the thoughts
Of the old Man his only Son was now
The dearest object that he knew on earth.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His Heart and his Heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For dalliance and delight, as is the use
Of Fathers, but with patient mind enforc'd
To acts of tenderness; and he had rock'd
His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on Boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the young one in his sight, when he
Had work by his own door, or when he sate
With sheep before him on his Shepherd's stool,
Beneath that large old Oak, which near their door

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Stood, and from it's enormous breadth of shade
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was call'd
The CLIPPING TREE,* a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestow'd
Upon the child, if he disturb'd the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scar'd them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hoop'd

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

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With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect Shepherd's Staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipp'd
He as a Watchman oftentimes was plac'd
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock,
And to his office prematurely call'd
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help,
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise.

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While this good household thus were living on
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his Brother's Son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means,
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had press'd upon him, and old Michael now
Was summon'd to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This un-look'd for claim
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had gather'd so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seem'd that his sole refuge was to sell
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,

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And his heart fail'd him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sun-shine of God's love
Have we all liv'd, yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a Stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the Sun itself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I,
And I have liv'd to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil Man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a chearful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land

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Shall not go from us, and it shall be free,
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou knowest,
Another Kinsman, he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade, and Luke to him shall go,
And with his Kinsman's help and his own thrift,
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor
What can be gain'd?" At this, the old man paus'd,
And Isabel sate silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy — at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the Neighbours bought
A Basket, which they fill'd with Pedlar's wares,
And with this Basket on his arm, the Lad

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Went up to London, found a Master there,
Who out of many chose the trusty Boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas, where he grew wond'rous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And at his birth-place built a Chapel, floor'd
With Marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Pass'd quickly thro' the mind of Isabel,
And her face brighten'd. The Old Man was glad,
And thus resum'd. "Well! Isabel, this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough — I wish indeed that I
Were younger, but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he could go, the Boy should go to-night."

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Here Michael ceas'd, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The House-wife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her Son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work; for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she for the two last nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go,
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Lad made answer with a jocund voice,
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recover'd heart. That evening her best fare

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Did she bring forth, and all together sate
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

Next morning Isabel resum'd her work,
And all the ensuing week the house appear'd
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their Kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy,
To which requests were added that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to shew it to the neighbours round:
Nor was there at that time on English Land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house return'd, the Old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The House-wife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,

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Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill,
In that deep Valley, Michael had design'd
To build a Sheep-fold, and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which close to the brook side
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walk'd;
And soon as they had reach'd the place he stopp'd,
And thus the Old Man spake to him. "My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me; with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good.

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When thou art from me, even if I should speak
Of things thou canst not know of.——After thou
First cam'st into the world, as it befalls
To new-born infants, thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day pass'd on,
And still I lov'd thee with encreasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
First uttering without words a natural tune,
When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month follow'd month,
And in the open fields my life was pass'd
And in the mountains, else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
—But we were playmates, Luke; among these hills,
As well thou know'st, in us the old and young
Have play'd together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."

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Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobb'd aloud; the Old Man grasp'd his hand,
And said, "Nay do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Receiv'd at others hands, for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who lov'd me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they liv'd
As all their Forefathers had done, and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mold.
I wish'd that thou should'st live the life they liv'd.
But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from sixty years.
These fields were burthen'd when they came to me;
'Till I was forty years of age, not more

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Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toil'd and toil'd; God bless'd me in my work,
And 'till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go." At this the Old Man paus'd,
Then, pointing to the Stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resum'd:
"This was a work for us, and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one Stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
I for the purpose brought thee to this place.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope:—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and stout;—do thou thy part,
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resign'd to thee;
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,

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Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.——Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes—it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke, thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love, when thou art gone
What will be left to us! — But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested, and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, let this Sheep-fold be
Thy anchor and thy shield; amid all fear
And all temptation, let it be to thee
An emblem of the life thy Fathers liv'd,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see

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A work which is not here, a covenant
'Twill be between us —— but whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stoop'd down,
And as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold; at the sight
The Old Man's grief broke from him, to his heart
He press'd his Son, he kissed him and wept;
And to the House together they return'd.

Next morning, as had been resolv'd, the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reach'd
The public Way, he put on a bold face;
And all the Neighbours as he pass'd their doors
Came forth, with wishes and with farewell pray'rs,
That follow'd him 'till he was out of sight.

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A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing; and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wond'rous news,
Which, as the House-wife phrased it, were throughout
The prettiest letters that were ever seen.
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months pass'd on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty, and at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

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There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would break the heart:—Old Michael found it so.
I have convers'd with more than one who well
Remember the Old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still look'd up upon the sun,
And listen'd to the wind; and as before
Perform'd all kinds of labour for his Sheep,
And for the land his small inheritance.
And to that hollow Dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the Old Man — and 'tis believ'd by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

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There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, with that his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years from time to time
He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel,
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a Stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was nam'd The Evening Star
Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood, yet the Oak is left
That grew beside their Door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Gill.

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NOTES TO THE POEM OF THE BROTHERS.

NOTE I.

Page 26—line 20 "There were two springs that bubbled side by side." The impressive circumstance here described, actually took place some years ago in this country, upon an eminence called Kidstow Pike, one of the highest of the mountains that surround Hawes-water. The summit of the pike was stricken by lightning; and every trace of one of the fountains disappeared, while the other continued to flow as before.

NOTE II.

Page 29—line 5 "The thought of death sits easy on the man," &c. There is not any thing more worthy of remark in the manners of the inhabitants of these mountains, than the tranquillity, I might say indifference, with which they think and talk upon the subject of death. Some of the country church-yards, as here described, do not contain a single tombstone, and most of them have a very small number.

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NOTES TO THE POEM OF MICHAEL.

NOTE I.

Page 213—line 14 "There's Richard Bateman," &c. The story alluded to here is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ings Chapel; and is on the right hand side of the road leading from Kendal to Ambleside.

NOTE II.

Page 217—line 4 "———had design'd to build a sheep-fold." &c. It may be proper to inform some readers, that a sheep-fold in these mountains is an unroofed building of stone walls, with different divisions. It is generally placed by the side of a brook, for the convenience of washing the sheep; but it is also useful as a shelter for them, and as a place to drive them into, to enable the shepherds conveniently to single out one or more for any particular purpose.

END.

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ERRATA.

Preface, p. xi. line 11, for Lucretia—read Lucretius.

Page 145, line 1, vol. ii. place a comma after the words "disconsolate creature," and omit the comma after "perhaps"

Page 147, line 5, vol. ii. for "both grey red and green," substitute grey, scarlet, and green.

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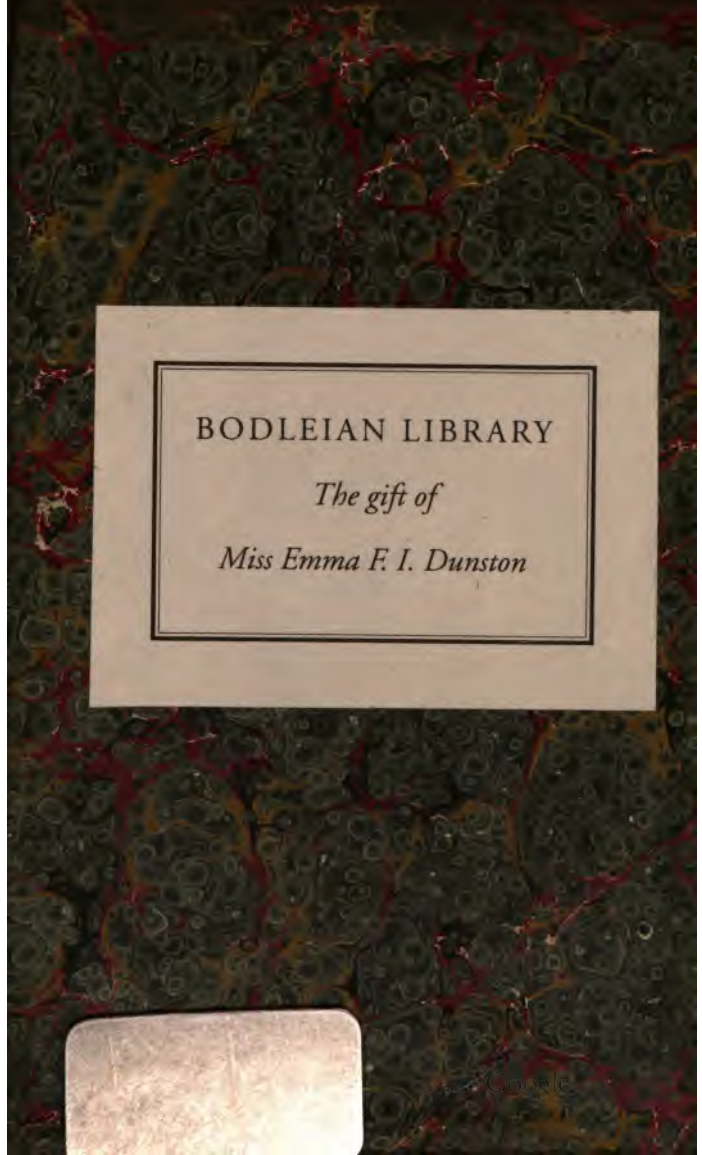
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